



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

TESTIMONY

H.B. 2968

Related to Fishing

Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on
Ocean and Marine Resources

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SUBJECT: Senate Bill 2162 Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone

The University is in agreement with the intent of this bill. We wish to suggest some changes to the bill; these are given below:

1. Delete (a) and substitute the text below:

Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone. (a) The Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone shall be established to promote the study of artificial reef technology and research relating to the conservation of marine resources. The ultimate goal for establishing this zone is to develop technology to enhance Hawaii's fishery resources.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person within the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone to catch or take any aquatic life provided that any researcher licensed by the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Committee may do so for scientific purposes. The general public may continue utilizing the zone for non-consumptive purposes such as the underwater viewing of marine life, surfing, photography, etc.

(c) The Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Committee will be comprised of but not limited to individuals from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the University of Hawaii, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and will be established to review research to be conducted in the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone.

(d) All laws enacted for the protection of aquatic life or wildlife shall likewise apply to the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone, except that no person or persons, other than those designated by this section, shall be authorized to catch or take aquatic life in this zone and then only for scientific purposes.

(e) The location of the Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone should be determined by the Department of Land and Natural Resources in consultation with University of Hawaii researchers. The site selected should be of a size appropriate to conduct such research with a surrounding no-fishing buffer zone.

The primary rationale for the proposed changes to HB 2968 is to broaden the base of research access to Mamala Bay Artificial Reef Research Zone. As presently written, the bill conveys full authority for management of the zone to the University of Hawaii. We feel that common management interests and jurisdictional responsibilities held by the other agencies suggested as co-managers, justifies their participation and appropriately ensures their involvement in key management decisions.

As presently written the bill delineates a specific site. It has been brought to our attention that long range plans by the state could be in conflict if the Kewalo site as outlined in this bill were to be used; thus, we believe that by working with the Department of Land and Natural Resources a more appropriate location can be identified.

If enacted, we believe that the suggested changes would expedite the application of this bill.

To our knowledge no state in the union has an artificial reef research zone that specifically excludes fishing. Enactment of this bill will help to establish Hawaii as a leader in and center for habitat and fisheries enhancement technology. In addition, broadening the base of research access to the zone as accomplished by our proposed changes would have the ancillary benefit of encouraging commitment of additional Federal funding to artificial reef research in the State of Hawaii.